AN EXHORTATION Vnto the Learned Divines assembled AT WESTMINSTER

To set an order touching Fayth and Religion in the Church of

ENGLAND.

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Unto the Learned Divines assembled AT WESTMINSTER

To set an order touching Fayth and Religion in the Church of

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BEloved Freinds and high learned Schoole men, on whom both high and low, both Rich and poore, doe depend, beleeving that (through your great learning) you can so judge of matters of Fayth and Religion, that all what you shall judge, approve, and allow therein, must of necessity be holden for the truth, as also, all that you shall not judge, approve, and allow, must not be holden for the truth.

Therfore I thought it good, and also my duty (beloved in the Lord) to put you in mynd, that in this your Synod, you follow not the order of the Church of Rome, as to set such an order & Rule in Fayth and Religion, that shall bynde and compell men, to beleeve your Articles of Fayth and Religion, as also not to be your owne Iudges therein except for your owne Assembly but not for others) as if you can not Erre, and so forbid others, that agree not with you (touching your Articles of Fayth and Religion) to teach, prynt and publish theyr Fayth and Religion, on payne of Impri-

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sonment, Baniſhment &c as the Papiſts, Lutherans and other Sects doe, in forceing men to theyr Aſſemblyes againſt theyr conſciences.

But Iexhort you herein, to follow the Apoſtles Doctryne, and order (they as Maſter buylders) haue ſet downe, for a Pattern and Rule for every man to follow and practiſe: ſo that you, nor any whoſoever haue Authority (though of high degree, or learned) to ſet downe an other order, Rule or Pattern of Fayth and Religion, for all men to follow and practiſe, ſeeing that is done already by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, which we all ought to follow and practiſe, but none other order on payne of the curſe. Gal 1. 8. 2. Tim. 1. 13. Luk. 9. 49. notwithſtanding, ſeeing there are many Aſſemblyes of Christians, and each thinke (as you doe) theyr owne Fayth and Religion to be beſt, you may ſet orders therein for your ſelues. upon condition that you tolerate others, as you ought to doe, elſe you ſhall doe contrary to chriſts command. Math. 13. 28. 30. Mark. 9. 38. Luk. 9. 49. and ſo judge an other mans Servants, which you ought not to doe, as you mayread. Rom. 14: 4: 18. it is Chriſts office only, to judge in matters of Fayth & Religion, vnto whom as to our only Iudge, we all doe ſtand or fall; therefore I exhort you, not to perſecute any, for theyr Fayth and Religion.

It may be you will ſay, ſhall wee then tolerate every Sect? Iſay yea, you ought to doe it, if you will obey Chriſt, and not diſpleaſe him, who forbiddeth you & the Magiſtrate to pluck up the Tares, and commandeth you both, to let them grow till the harveſt, that is the end of the world. Matth. 13, 30. Here may you ſee that both the Magiſtrate & you ought to obey Chriſt, who will not have you to forbid any that teach in his name, though they bee Tares and follow not you, Mar. 9, 38. Luk. 9. 50. If you will not haue any Sects (as I alſo would hinder them; if I might lawfuly doe it) I will ſhew you a way, how to hynder them. without breaking Chriſts commands: the beſt way is (under correction) that you ſet downe a Rule, how all men may certainly know, a Sect from the true Church & the true Church from a Sect which being done (as it can well be done) all men that truely loue theyr Salvation, will Seperate from the Sects, and Ioyne them ſelves to the true Church: for then all men that will, may ſearch the Scriptures, and ſo eaſily know the true Church from the Sects.

For the better knowledge herein, all parents ought to bring vp thyer Children, to Read perfectly in the Bible, ſo that they may (as Chriſt exhorteth) ſeareh the ſcripture for the begetting & ſetteling of theyr Fayth: If any parents through poverty, are not able ſo to bring vp theyr Children, let free Schooles bee provided, in every Towne & vill age for that purpoſe, with

godly

godly teachers therein this order being taken & ordayned, the Sects will soone be hindred, if not, yet Sects must be tolerated, seeing thereby, those Assemblyes which are conformable, to the Pattern of Gods word, will bee the better knowne and approved, as you may read. 2. Cor. 11. 19.

Also you shall please to understand, if you will ordayne such an order, as Christ hath ordayned, touching the administration of his Baptisme, and his Supper, as also touching the doctryns of God, his son & holy ghost, as Christ, his Prophets & Apostles haue taught, then no Godly persons, shall haue just cause to except against it, and so weeshall bee of one heart & of one mynd therein: But if you shall ordayne, such an Erroneous & Tyrranical order of doctrine & discipline, as the fathers of the Church of Rome, haue taught & ordayned then all godly men shall hane just cause to except against it, seeing wee ought not tofollow them, but Christ, his Prophets & Apostles, in the doctrines of Fayth & Religion: which if you please todoe, as you ought, then shall we not be divided into so many Sects as now we are: nor then shall the doctryns of Christ, his Prophets & Apostles bee borne downe & suppressed, by the Authority, & sword of the Magistrate as now it is. Therfore I exhort you, onely to use the sword of the spirit which is the vvord of god for the suppressing of Sects; but not the Magistrates sword, except against such as use that sword (as the Papists nowdoe) agaynst you, as you haue done against us, for which God is so displeased, that he will not release you, till you establish Christs Iubile and freedom of conscience: Luk. 4. 18.

I pray consider if the bloud of those men, you name Anabaptists, and Brownists, and others, which your Church haue burned, banished & hanged, doe not crye to God for vengeame agaynst you: seeing they suffred for Righteousnes sake, being faithful to God, in that they beleived: therefore Christ sayth Math. 5. 10. blessed are they that suffer persecution, for Righteousnes sake, and sayth, the Kingdome of Heaven is theirs: and though they erred in some things (yet seeing it was of ignorance, and not of obstinacy) that, made them not vnrighteous, nor worthy of death: you Know the Apostle sayth, Rom: 14. 14. though he was perswaded, that nothing is vnclean in it self, yet to him that so judgeth, to him it is unclean: so if a man judge some doctrynes to be Error, thongh it be no Error, yet to him that so judgeth, t is error: if he suffer death for that he judgeth to be truth, hee suffreth for Righteousnes sake, being truth in his judgement: therefore judge you not according to the outward appearance, butjudge Righteous judgement as Christ exhorteth you for whosoever in thee things serve christ, is ac-

ceptable to God, and is approved of Godly men, as the Apoſtle teacheth. Rom. 14. 18.

Further, I exhort you, not to ſtudye the Romish fathers any longer, but the holy ſcriptures of the Prophets & Apoſtles only, nor yet to proue your doctrines from Romiſh fathers, but from Chriſt, his Prophets & Apoſtles, whoſe doctrines only eſtabliſh the Conſcience, being truly tranſlated & expounded, which may wel be knowne, if it make no contradiction, for they teach not contrary one another; but the Romiſh fathers teach not only contrary Chriſt, his Prophets & Apoſtles, but alſo contrary one another; and all of them are found very ignorant in the knowledge of Gods word, and in the expoſition therof: So that you ſhal doe wel, to ordayne that no Teacher alledge any fathers, but Gods word only for proof of theyr doctrines; which being done, there wilbe great hope to diminiſh the Sects, and to eſtabliſh a true Church in vnity of Fayth & Religion: Alſo I exhort you not to condemne your ſelves, towards others, in the ſame things you allow in yourſelves: namely; you will not that the Papiſts be judges over you, in theyr owne cauſes, ſo you ought not to be judges over others in your owne cauſes; for wherin you judge & condemne others, and your ſelves doe the ſame things, therein you ſhall judge & condemne your ſelves, as the Apoſtle teacheth. Rom. 2. 1. Alſo ſeeing you (like the Jewes) haue more zeal then knowledge, touching the Keeping of the weekely Sabbath, I deſire you better to conſider of the Apoſtles doctryne therein Rom. 14. 4. 5. then ſhal you not force men, to obſerve that Shaddow, more then the other ſhaddowing Sabbath? ſeeing the weekely Sabbath was a Shaddow, ſo were as the yearly Sabbaths, and now all aboliſhed by Chriſts comming: therfore condemne no man therein, nevertheleſſe; will you eſteem one day aboue another, yet you ought not to condemne others that eſteeme every day alike for then ſhallyou doe contrary to the doctryne of the Apoſtle, Col. 2. 16. 17. let no man oppreſſe, or defraude his brother in any matter, For the Lord is an aveuger, all of ſuch things. 1 Theſſ. 4. 6.

Alſo I deſyre good order may be taken for the maintenance of the poore that ſo no men, women nor children, be forced & dryven (through want) to beg from doore to doore; verely the lord loveth the poore now ſowel as he did afore tyme, when he ordayned a law for theyr mayntenance as you may read in Deutr. 14. 28. ſaying, at the end of the yeare, thou ſhalt bring forth all the tithes of thine increase the ſame yeare, and lay it vp within thy gates, then the Levite ſhal come becauſe he hath no inheritance with thee) and the ſtranger, the fatherleſſe, and the widdows (that are poore) within thy gates,

and

and ſhall eat and be filled, that the lord thy God, may bleſſe thee in all the work of thine hands whichthou doeſt: Levit. 19, 10. & 23. 22. & Deut. 15. 9. 11.

I beſeech you, zealouſly to conſider, if this Morall law of God be now aboliſhed through Chriſts ccmming, if not, let it I pray you be zealouſly practiſed: for as the mayntenance of the Teachers and poore was then, even ſo is the mayntenance of the Teachersand Poore now: Thus hopeing a Reformation(of all Romiſh doctrines, Ceremonyes, and Tyrannical diſcipline) according to the pattern of Gods holy word: I commend you to the God of Peace, who make you perfect in all good works, to doe his will, working in you, that which is pleaſing in his ſight, through Ieſus Chriſt, Amen.

I beſeech you to ſuffer the words of exhortation, for I have written to you in few words and in loue, though not in the enticing ſpeech of mans wiſdome, yet in plaine evidence of the power & ſpirit of Chriſt. 1. Cor. 2. 4. 7. 10. you ſhal pleaſe to read. Mat. 7. 22. They that loue inſtruction, ſhal increaſe in knowledge, but they that hate it, ſhal remayne in Error and ignorance. Proverb. 12. 1. Eſay. 2. 3, & Micah. 4. 2. As you would that men ſhould doe to you, ſo doe you to them likewiſe. Mat. 7. 12. Luk. 6. 31. otherwyſe Chriſt will pronounce you unrighteous. Written in Syon(not Babylon) the 23. of the 8 moneth called October. by Mark Leonard Buſher, in the 72 yeare of his Age: a Citizen of the Famous and Honourable City London: though aboue 36 yeares, a Pilgrim in Holland, for the word of God and Teſtimony of Ieſus Chriſt. Reve 12. 17. Anno Dom. 1643. Ro. ſtyle Anno Dom: Syons ſtyle. 1659.

THE END.